Family History Capers

Volume 48 **Summer 2025** **Number 4**

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P.O. Box 7155 Ann Arbor, Michigan 48107-7155

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Regular meetings are usually held at St. Joseph Mercy Hospital Education Center, 5305 Elliott Drive, Ypsilanti, MI 48197. See washtenawgenealogy.org to confirm location in case of temporary change. Meetings will also be held on Zoom. All meetings are open to the public.

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Queries with a reference to Washtenaw County and the surrounding area may be submitted by anyone, and may be published in *Capers*, space permitting. Members may submit queries for any locality. Please include a name, date and locality as well as a specific request. Do not use abbreviations. E-mail to info@washtenawgenealogy.org

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GSWC QUARTERLY, *FAMILY HISTORY CAPERS*

Editorial Committee: Jerome Drummond, Marcia McCrary, Cyndy Steward, **News-Pages:** Janet Gilkey, Nancy Howard, Marcia McCrary, Tim Salatin. Articles of general interest as well as those focusing on Washtenaw County and surrounding area are solicited for consideration. The Society and the Editors do not assume responsibility for errors of fact or opinion which may appear in any contributor's statement.

WASHTENAW COUNTY RURAL SCHOOLS HISTORY SERIES
BRIDGEWATER TOWNSHIP SCHOOLS
(Part Two) (Schools Articles Continued from Caper v.48 #3, p.43-49)
Compiled by Cyndy Steward and Marcia McCrary

This is a continuation of the materials on rural schools in Washtenaw County. The most recent article was part one of the Bridgewater rural schools. Much of this information is found in the Michigan Historical Collections, the Washtenaw Intermediate School District records, 1834-1966, box 1, records, Bentley Historical Library, University of Michigan, Ann Arbor. The Bentley Library also has more information about Bridgewater Schools in their Manchester Historical Society records. The students relied heavily on Chapman's *History of Washtenaw County.*

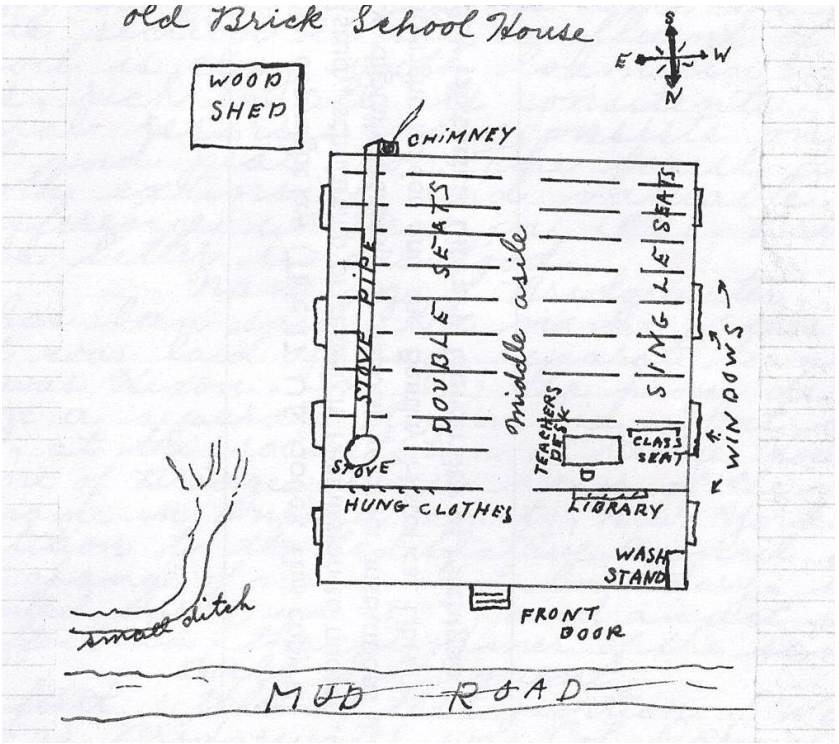
Bridgewater Station District #1: *[Ed Note: Previously printed in Capers 27 #2 p24-25: 1940 Christmas Roll Call and Students, 1940-1941, plus Teachers from 1891-1941.]*

Chapman's *History of Washtenaw County,* names many first settlers of the township. The students listed six people who were living in 1881 in the area of Bridgewater Station School, and still were alive in 1941: Leonard Fleeman, age 80; Christina Boetner, age 90; John Fellenberger, age 71; Charles Fisher, age 71; Mrs. Eva Mann, age 74; and Simon F. Nisle, age 83.

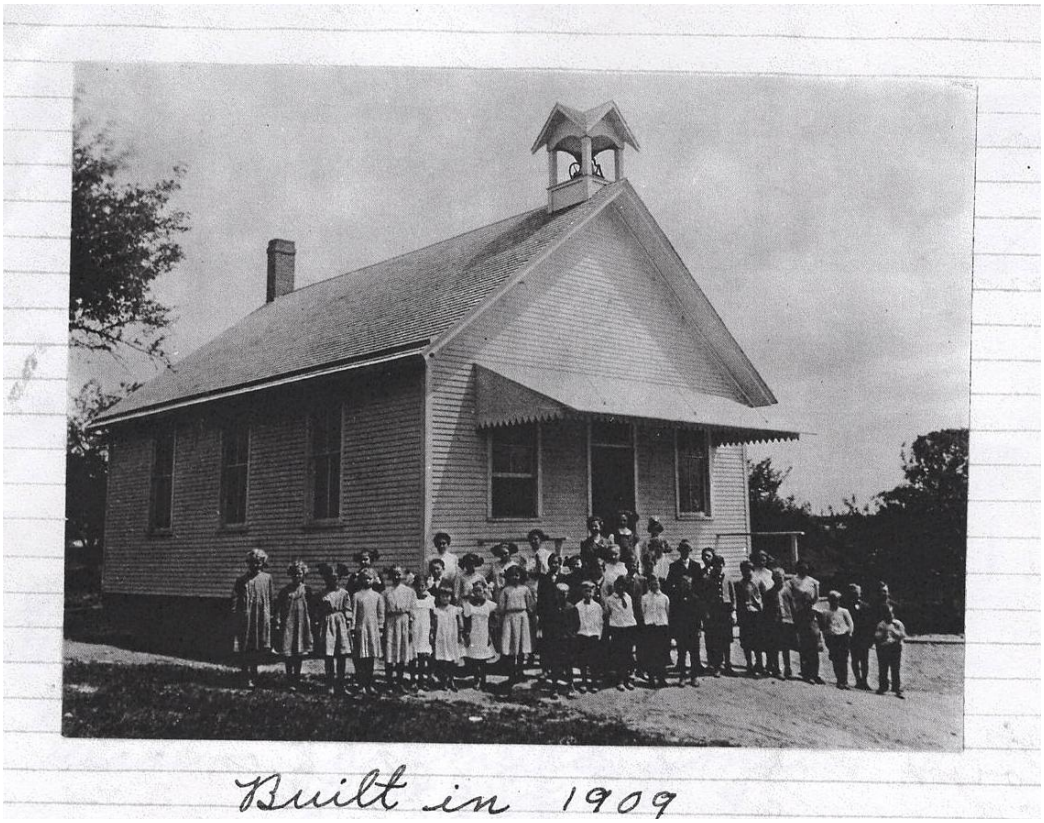
"The old brick school house is located across the road from the new school house. The brick school house had two rooms." Attendance averaged about 40 pupils a year, their ages ranged from 5 to 20. In 1906, with Anna Bowling as teacher, there were 52 pupils, the largest enrollment up to 1941. In 1896 was the smallest number of 13. And the teacher was Lottie Schlickt.

One attendee of the brick school recalled that one day they had to move "to the east side of the room because of an awful hail storm coming from the west which broke most of the west windows." Next to the school was a waterfilled ditch where the boys often caught frogs. Fruit Basket Tip Over was a popular game.

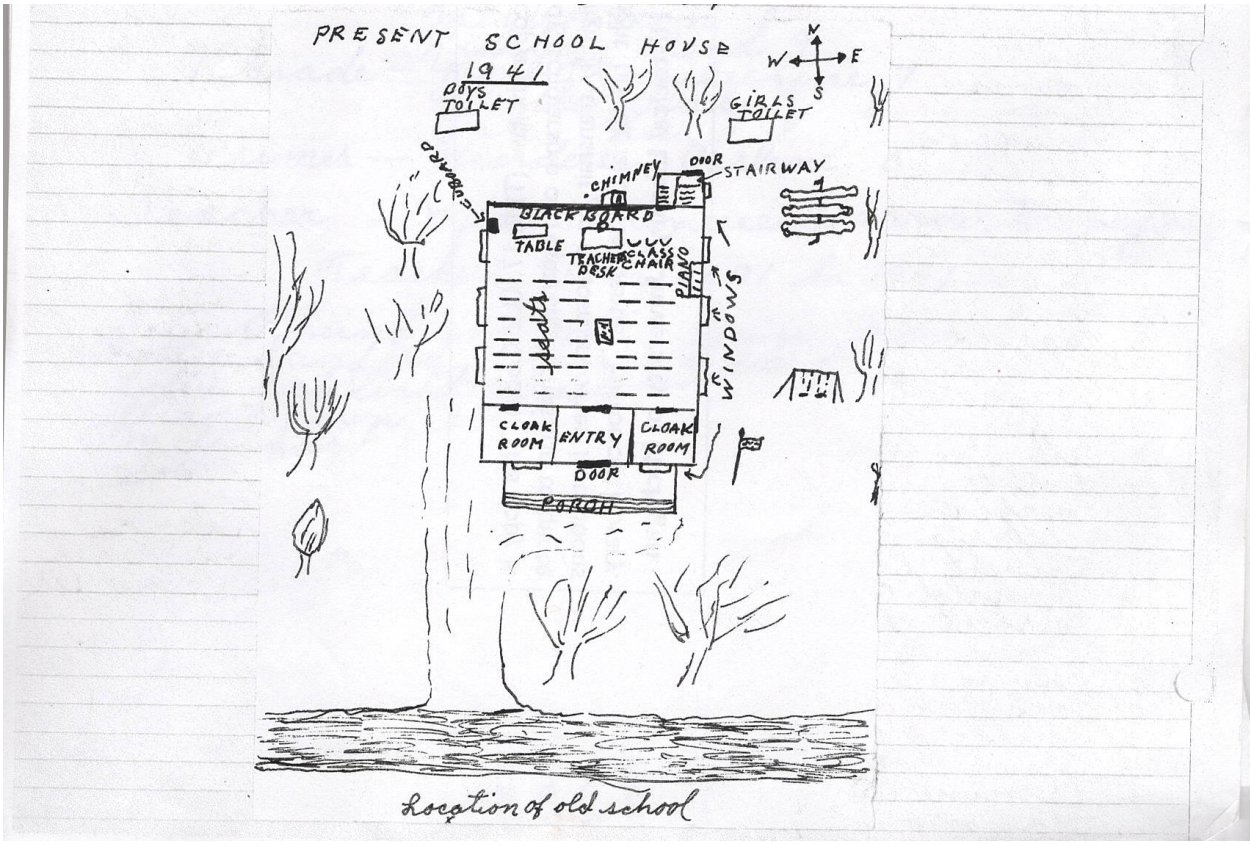
"The present school was built of wood in the summer of 1909 on property of the Beotner [sic] farm." The school got its name because Bridgewater had a railroad station thus calling the school Bridgewater Station School." "Planks for our stage was [sic] bought for $2.44 in 1919."



"Present School", 1941



Location of Bridgewater Station School in 1941



1898 Manual District #1- Director: Phillip Blum, Jr., Bridgewater; Moderator: F. W. Schoen; Assessor: Oscar Blum.

1925 Directory Bridgewater Station School #1:

Title	**Name**	***Address, Rural Route***	**Town of Residence**	**Tr. Credential**
Director:	BUSS, Otto		Bridgewater	
Moderator:	RENTSCHLER, William		Bridgewater	
Treasurer:	BERSUDER, George		Bridgewater	
Teacher:	STURDEVANT, Marie		Manchester	Limited

1931 Directory Bridgewater Station School #1:

Director:	REYER, Julius		Bridgewater	
Moderator:	KLAGER, Erwin		Bridgewater	
Treasurer:	BERSUDER, George		Bridgewater	
Teacher:	MONAGHAN, Helene	Box 46	Bridgewater	Nor. Ltd. Ex. '32

Bridgewater Station School Census, taken in 1903

This school census was taken by Philip F. Blum, director, the last 15 days ending Sept. 7, 1903, and signed on Sept. 11, 1903, before W. H. Every, Twp Clerk. This 1903 statistical report lists moderator F.W. Schoen; treasurer Michael Klager; and director for the ensuing year George Boettner. George Becker was the teacher for 9 months, with a salary of $198.

The financial report lists that one student graduated from eighth grade. In the census were 57 people, those over 5 and under 20 were 27 males and 30 females. Of that number, there were 16 males and 18 females who attended.

[Ed. Note: We have alphabetized the names below for the 1903 and the 1908 school census for easier perusal. The original was in no discernable order.]

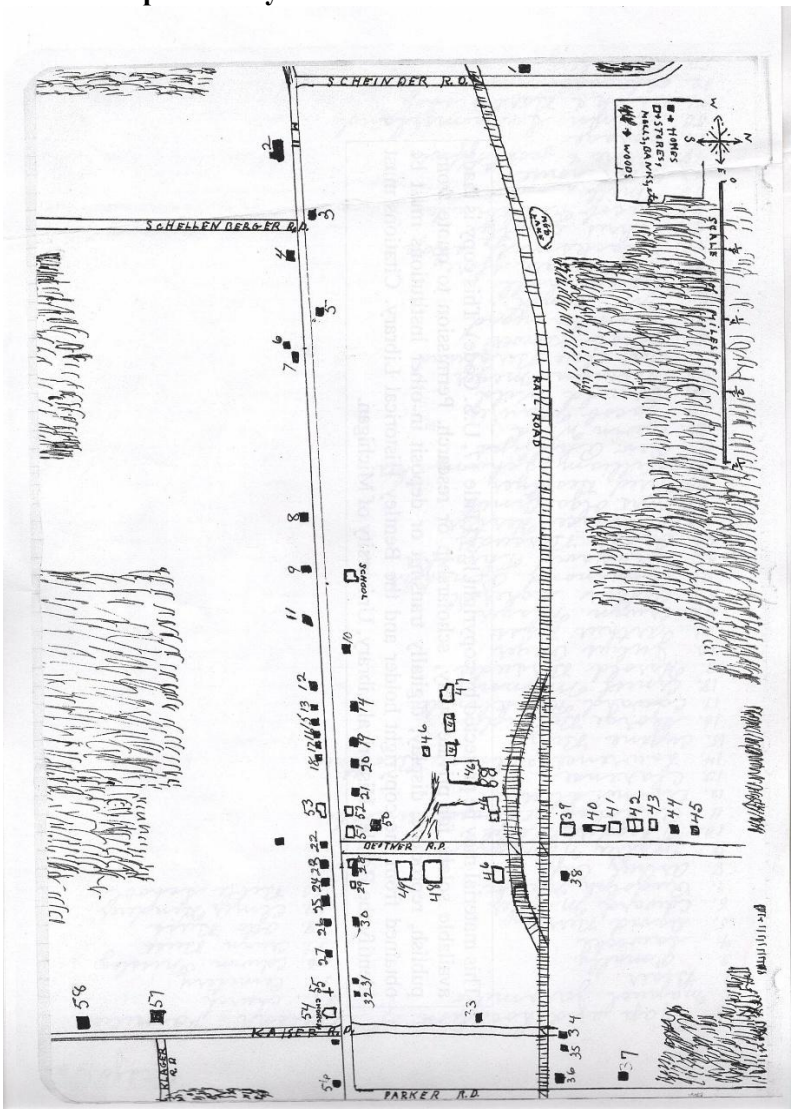
Name	Age		Name	Age
BERNER, Alta	13		KLAGER, Erwin	06
BERNER, Emma	07		LAYHER, Adolph	11
BERNER, Lewis	11		LAYHER, Arthur	09
BERNER, Lydia	09		LAYHER, Fred	19
BERNER, Maittia	15		LAYHER, Julia	17
BERSUDER, Delia	05		LAYHER, Luella	06
BERSUDER, Edward	10		LAYHER, Olga	15
BERSUDER, Ida	19		LAYHER, Rudolph	13
BERSUDER, Joseph	08		LAYHER, Ruth	05
BERSUDER, Oscar	12		KIDDLEBROOK, Sanford	19
BERSUDER, Rudolph	14		RIEDEL, Anton	09
BLUM, Annetta	2_?		RIEDEL, Blanche	18
BLUM, Emmet	1_?		RIEDEL, Emma	14
BLUM, Joseph	05		RIEDEL, Hilda	07
BLUM, Madgalin [sic]	06		RIEDEL, Lavern	06
BREITENWISHER, Alina	06		RIEDEL, Margaret	07
BREITENWISHER, Clarance	07		RHEINFRANK, Manda	14
BREITENWISHER, Wilbur	05		SCHADE, Gladys	1_?
EISEMAN, Edna	06		SCHOEN, Viola	09
EISEMAN, Ella	07		TUFEL. Hattie	13
GALL, Samuel	16		ULRICH, George	19
HILDINGER, Arthur	10		WAKENHUT, Emanuel	15
HILDINGER, Vera	05		WAKENHUT, Herman	19
HOLZHAUER, Emma	08		WAKENHUT, Lydia	17
HOLZHAUER, Viva	10		WAKENHUT, Mary	13
KIDD, Juanita	08		WAKENHUT, Suzie	10
KIRKWOOD, Carl	07		WAKENHUT, Willie	06
KIRKWOOD, Hazel	09		WELLER, Theodore	1_?

Bridgewater Station #1: Scholars of School Census, Ending July 13, 1908.
Philip F. Blum, sworn 1st Aug. 1908, before me, M. J. Flynn, Twp. Clerk: 51 scholars.

Name of Child	Age	Birth Date	Parent or Guardian	Address
BERSUDER, Delia	10	18-Jan	BERSUDER, Joe	Bridgewater
BERSUDER, Edward	15	21-Dec	BERSUDER, Joe	Bridgewater
BERSUDER, Helen	8	21-Apr	BERSUDER, Joe	Bridgewater
BERSUDER, Joseph	13	27-Jan	BERSUDER, Joe	Bridgewater
BERSUDER, Oscar	17	13-Mar	BERSUDER, Joe	Bridgewater
BERSUDER, Raymond	5	Apr 8 1901	BERSUDER, Joe	Bridgewater
BLUM, Annetta	13	4-Feb	BLUM, Phil	Manchester
BLUM, Emmet	12	17-Apr	BLUM, Phil	Manchester

Name of Child	Age	Birth Date	Parent or Guardian	Address
BLUM, Lousia	8	24-Sep	BLUM, Phil	Manchester
BLUM, Minnie	9	9-Jun	BLUM, Phil	Manchester
BOETTNER, Lorena	10	9-Feb	BOETTNER, George	Bridgewater
BOETTNER, Selma	7	11-Jun	BOETTNER, George	Bridgewater
BREINING, Chas	11	17-Nov	BREINING, Wm	Bridgewater
BREINING, Rose	8	7-Aug	BREINING, Wm	Bridgewater
BREITENWISHER, Alma	14	16-Apr	BREITENWISHER, Herman	Bridgewater
BREITENWISHER, Clarence	12	24-Oct	BREITENWISHER, Herman	Bridgewater
BREITENWISHER, Em	5	Sep 27 1901	BREITENWISHER, Herman	Bridgewater
BREITENWISHER, Wilbur	10	6-Jun	BREITENWISHER, Herman	Bridgewater
BUSS, Arthur	8	9-Apr	BUSS. Otto	Saline
BUSS, Florence	10	7-Aug	BUSS, Otto	Saline
EISEMAN, Edna	10	30-Jul	EISEMAN, Fred	Saline
EISEMAN, Ella	12	17-Jul	EISEMAN, Fred	Saline
EISEMAN, Otto	8	17-Mar	EISEMAN, Fred	Saline
EWING, Letona	10	20-Feb	EWING, Harris	Bridgewater
FAIL, Jacob	16	21-Aug	Unknown	Bridgewater
HARRIS, Leslie	8	15-Apr	HARRIS, Thom	Bridgewater
HILDINGER, Arthur	15	2-Jun	HILDINGER, Chas	Bridgewater
HILDINGER, Vera	10	18-May	HILDINGER, Chas	Bridgewater
HOLZHAUR, Erma	13	14-Jul	HOLZHAUR, Ben	Bridgewater
HOLZHAUR, Viva	14	18-Aug	HOLZHAUR, Ben	Bridgewater
KIDD, Evelyn	8	14-Mar	REIDEL, Frank	Saline
KLAGER, Erwin	7	1-Nov	KLAGER, Mike	Bridgewater
KLAGER, Sutlur	11	2-Mar	KLAGER, Mike	Bridgewater
MEGALE, Maggie	12	18-Sep	MEGALE, Emma	Bridgewater
NISSLY, Elsa	7	13-Sep	NISSLY, Geo.	Saline
NISSLY, Ida	8	19-Dec	NISSLY, Geo.	Saline
REIDEL, Alvin	7	1-Dec	REIDEL, John	Saline
REIDEL, Anton	14	21-Feb	REIDEL, John	Saline
REIDEL, Hilda	12	3-Oct	REIDEL, John	Saline
REIDEL, Laura	11	15-Jun	REIDEL, John	Saline
REIDEL, Margrete	12	1-Oct	REIDEL, Frank	Saline
REIDEL, Marie	9	27-Mar	REIDEL, John	Saline
RHEINFRANK, Maud	18	17-Feb	RHEINFRANK, Geo.	Bridgewater
SCHADE, Gladye	13	1-Apr	SCHADE, Conrad	Bridgewater
SCHEURER, Gail	6	7-May	SCHEURER, Chas	Bridgewater
SCHEURER, Gertrude	8	12-May	SCHEURER, Chas	Bridgewater
SHERDT, Theo	19	????	SHERDT, Geo.	Manchester
TUEFLE, Hattie	18	31-May	TUEFLE, Mike	Bridgewater
WACKENHUT, Lizzie	14	10-Jan	WACKENHUT, Mike	Bridgewater
WACKENHUT, Mary	18	30-May	WACKENHUT, Mike	Bridgewater
WACKENHUT, Willie	11	10-Jun	WACKENHUT, Mike	Bridgewater

Bridgewater Station Area Map with Key below:



Map #	Last Name or Building Name	First Name, if listed		Map #	Last Name or Building Name	First Name, if listed
1	JARAMILLO	Manuel		31	SCHUMAKER	William
2	BLAIR			32	PHILLIPS	Rev.
3	O'MALLY			33	WILD	Erwin
4	SAWICKI			34	MAURER	Jacob
5	BERRY	David		35	WILD	Arnold
6	MUELLER	Edward		36	MEYER	Herman
7	KLENKE	Rudolph		37	BERGLUND	Elsie, Mrs.
8	CUFF	Arthur		38	BOWER	Jacob
9	NOWACZYK	Walter		39	Lumber Yard	
10	WELLER	Theodore		40	ERNST	Mrs.

11	BERSUDER	Rudolph & Edward		41	Dance Hall	
12	STIERLE	Erwin		42	Hardware Store	
13	CLARENCE			43	Blacksmith Shop	
14	BEOTTNER	Lawrence & Elmer		44	SAUTTER	Chris
15	BETZ	Eugene		45	FINKBINDER	Jacob
16	BERSUDER	George		46	Mill	
17	FINKBINDER	Edward		47	Wool House	
18	MANN	Ernest		48	Store & Post Office	
19	BERSUDER	Harold		49	Garage	
20	REYER	Julius		50	SUMMERLAND	Glenn
21	BUSS	Arthur		51	Bank & Barber Shop	
22	KLAGER	Erwin		52	Old Garage	
23	SCHERDT	Arthur		53	Hatchery	
24	RENCHLER	Raymond		54	Church	
25	THRASHER	David, Mrs.		55	Cemetery	
26	BERSUDER	Oscar		56	NISSLEY	Edwin
27	HERTLER	Clarence		57	BUSS	Erwin
28	ERNST	Olga, Mrs.		58	BUSS	Otto
29	Not Labeled			59	HINDERER	Elmer
30	BEOTTNER	Fred		60	Bible School	

Dillingham School District #4

"The oldest former resident who could be contacted was Mr. Frank Johnson of Clinton. From him we gleaned the following information: At one time a log school existed on the old McDougal farm (now owned by Lawrence Tirb.) This was before 1860. When Mr. Johnson came to Dillingham School in 1868 he said it looked considerably older than it does today. The present school site was given by a Mr. Scott who formerly owned the property now in possession of Mr. Edgar King."

"The school is situated on an embankment. At the time the school land was given two or three rods at the foot of the hill were reserved for a lane for cows. This was fenced in." At one time, the school well became contaminated by cows, so the students had to bring pails from a nearby farm.

"The former teacher's desk had many drawers but this burned in the fire in October, 1920 when a mouse lit a match in one of the drawers. The desk burned though the floor but no further damage was done."

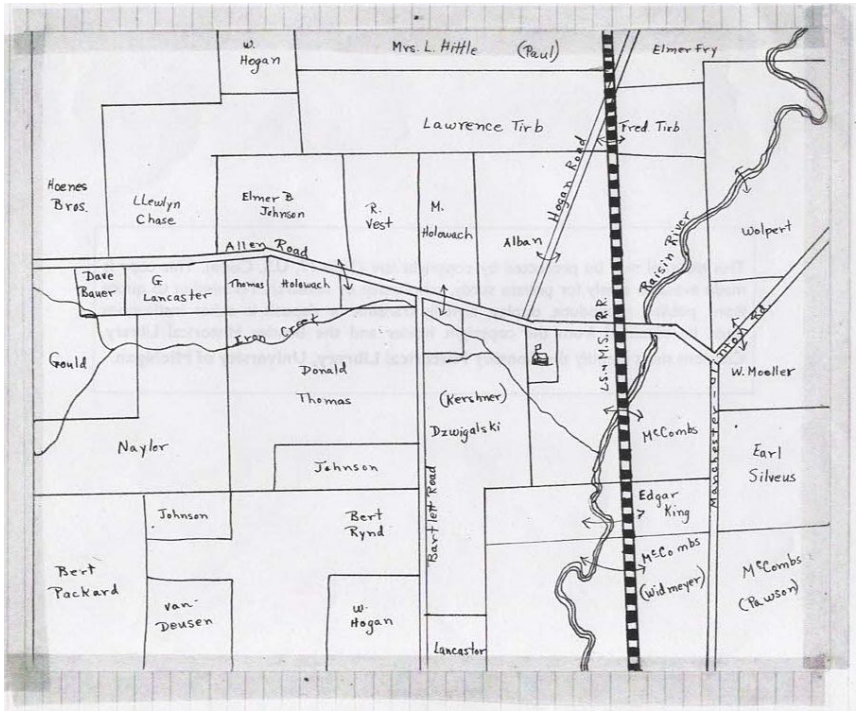
"…[T]here is a dictionary shelf below which a portion of the old bench remains. The library has been built in the remainder of the back wall." There were 300 books in the library.

In 1941, there were eight students and one teacher. Their names and grades are listed below.

Beginner	CARSON, Wilfred Lee		Third	CASTERLINE, Margaret
First	MOELLER, Suzanne		Fifth	TIRB, Virginia
First	KERSHNER, Evelyn		Fifth	KERSHNER, Hazel

Second	WERTH, Joan		Sixth	KERSHNER, James
			Teacher	NAGY, Goldie Mary

Hand drawn map of District No. 4, Dillingham Bridgewater Township of 1941 with a list of the families and their land. *[Ed Note: Renters are shown with parentheses.]*



1898 Manual Dillingham School District #4-Director: Lyle Crane, Clinton. Moderator, Allen Dillingham. Assessor, Buel Johnson

1925 Directory Dillingham School #4

Title	Name	Address, Rural Route	Town of Residence	Tr. Credential
Director:	JOHNSON, Elmer	R.R. No. 1	Clinton	
Moderator:	TIRB, Fred	R.R. No. 3	Clinton	
Treasurer:	FELDKAMP, Roy	R.R. No. 3	Clinton	
Teacher:	RAWSON, Grace	R.R. No. 3	Manchester	Third

1931 Directory Dillingham School #4

Title	Name	*Address, Rural Route*	Town of Residence	Tr. Credential
Director:	JOHNSON, Elmer	R. 1	Clinton	
Moderator:	TIRB, Fred	R. 1	Clinton	
Treasurer:	STARRETT, Charles	R. 1	Clinton	
Teacher:	EISELE, Isabel H.		Manchester	Life

[To Be Continued]

Cyndy Steward and Marcia McCrary *have been working on the Rural Schools project for several years. Nancy Krohn began collecting the information from the Bentley at least 10 years ago.*

&&&&&&&&&&

Using First Person Reports in Your Family History

By Jerome Drummond

Genealogists rely so much on official records and private papers because the subjects of their study are dead and have taken their life stories with them, and amongst those documents there are many gaps; sometimes a tombstone inscription is all we have to say that a person was here. My great great grandmother Hestor (Abbott) Talbot is one name among many on an obelisk monument in a churchyard as well as on a list of marriages from the registers of the Rev. John Black, Methodist circuit rider near Guelph, Ontario. She died shortly after the birth of my great grandmother Martha (Talbot) Forester, her only child. Hestor's widower James Talbot subsequently married a woman (and possible cousin) named Jane Oliver who bore him a good-sized family and Jane is the only one remembered in all other public records, genealogies and group sheets. It appears I am the only one who knows now that there was ever a Hestor Talbot.

What is the family history writer to do? The best thing you can do if there is no alternative is to tell what she would *likely* have done given that she was a woman in a certain place and certain time – in this case a woman born to a farmer near Guelph in 1818.

Had Hestor lived she would have likely done similar things that we see in the diary of a contemporary who lived just six farms further down the Eramosa Road. There was the family garden to tend for food the family ate that was different than the cash crops. These were usually root vegetables like potatoes, carrots and parsnips to store for the winter, or peas and beans for dry storage. She may have assisted in the harvest, the shelling of peas and beans and shucking of corn, baking for family consumption, church gatherings or raising bees, caring for her children and often the children of relations or neighbors, the wash, cooking, house cleaning, the going to town on a Saturday, the nursing of elders, the upholding of the religious and other traditions of the family, the education of children, needlework of all kinds, butter churning and cheesemaking, and the list is endless.

Another version of this technique is to incorporate contemporary testimony from people in a similar situation concerning how things were accomplished, because the probability is great that your ancestor did the same thing too.

My Talbot ancestors arrived in Canada in 1832 according to biographical information found in a reprinted atlas of their county of settlement from 1906. Land records and local history suggest that this date is correct or likely close. Many grandchildren of the family lived in the same place in 1906 and undoubtedly the 1832 date came from them. First-hand accounts of arrival by these ancestors are lacking, but a British authoress who liked to write about her travel experiences in Canada came by the same path in the same year; so, in my family history I substitute her testimony for theirs. I will not be far off the mark.

Arriving in Canada in 1832

Susannah Moodie was an English woman traveling with her husband to Canada in 1832 where they would settle. Women, writing about travel to other countries, was a popular literary genre in the Nineteenth Century. The following is taken from her book ***Roughing It In The Bush***. (Richard Bentley Publisher, New York, 1852).

I

"By daybreak all was hurry and confusion on board the Anne. I watched boat after boat depart for the island, full of people and goods, and envied them the glorious privilege of once more standing firmly on the earth after two long months of rocking and rolling at sea. How ardently we anticipate pleasure, which often ends in positive pain! Such was my case when at last indulged in the gratification so eagerly desired. As cabin passengers we were not included in the general order of purification, but were only obliged to send our servant, with the clothes and bedding we had used during the voyage, on shore, to be washed.

The ship was soon emptied of all her live cargo. My husband went off with the boats to reconnoiter the island, and I was left alone with my baby in the otherwise empty vessel... With the most intense desire to go on shore, I was doomed to look and long and envy every boatful of emigrants that glided past. Nor was this all; the ship was out of provisions, and I was condemned to undergo a rigid fast until the return of the boat, when the captain had promised a supply of fresh butter and bread. The vessel had been nine weeks at sea, the poor steerage passengers for the last two weeks had been out of food, and the captain had been obliged to feed them from the ship's stores. The promised bread was to be obtained from a small steamboat which plied daily between Quebec and the island, transporting convalescent emigrants and their goods in her upward trip and provisions for the sick on her return."

II

"As the sun rose above the horizon, all these matter-of-fact circumstances were gradually forgotten and merged in the surpassing grandeur of the scene that rose majestically before me. The previous day had been dark and stormy, and a heavy fog had concealed the mountain chain, which forms the stupendous background to this sublime view, entirely from our sight. As the clouds rolled away from their grey, bald brows, and cast into denser shadow the vast forest belt that girdled them round, they loomed out like mighty giants – Titans of the earth, in all their rugged and awful beauty – a thrill of wonder and delight pervaded my mind. The spectacle floated on my sight – my eyes were blinded with tears – blinded by the excess of beauty. I turned to the right and to the left. I looked up and down the glorious river, never had I beheld so many striking objects blended into one mighty whole! Nature had lavished all her noblest features in producing that enchanting scene.

The rocky isle in front, with its neat farmhouses at the eastern point, and its high bluff at the western extremity, crowned with the telegraph – the middle space occupied by tents and sheds for the cholera patients, and its wooded shores dotted over with motley groups – added greatly to the picturesque effect of the land scene. Then the broad glittering river, covered with boats darting to and fro, conveying passengers from twenty-five vessels, of various size and tonnage, which rode at anchor, with their flags flying from the masthead, gave an air of life and interest to the whole. Turning to the south side of the St. Lawrence, I was not less struck with its low fertile shores, white houses, and neat churches, whose slender spires and bright tin roofs shone like silver as they caught the first rays of the sun. As far as the eye could reach, a line of white buildings extended along the bank, their background formed by the purple hue of the dense, interminable forest. It was a scene unlike any I had ever beheld, and to which Britain contains no parallel."

III

"It was four o'clock when we landed on the rocks, which the rays of an intensely scorching sun had rendered so hot that I could scarcely place my foot upon them. How the people without shoes bore it I cannot imagine. Never shall I forget the extraordinary spectacle that met our sight the moment we passed the low range of bushes which formed a screen in front of the river. A crowd of many hundred Irish emigrants had been landed during the present and former day all this motley crew – men, women, and children, who were not confined by sickness to the sheds (which greatly resembled cattle-pens) – were employed in washing clothes or spreading them out on rocks and bushes to dry.

The men and the boys were in the water, while the women, with their scanty garments tucked above their knees, were tramping their bedding in tubs or in holes in the rocks, which the retiring tide had left half full of water. Those who did not possess washing tubs, pails, or iron pots, or could not obtain access to a hole in the rocks, were running to and fro, screaming and scolding in no measured terms. The confusion of Babel was among them. All talkers and no hearers – each shouting in his or her uncouth dialect, and all accompanying their vociferations with violent and extraordinary gestures, quite incomprehensible to the uninitiated. We were literally stunned by the strife of tongues. I shrank, with feeling almost akin to fear, from the hard-featured, sunburnt women as they elbowed rudely past me.

...my husband laughingly told me that I had seen enough of the island, and turning to the good-natured soldier, remarked that 'it could be no easy task to keep such wild savages in order.'

'You may well say that, sir – but our night scenes far exceed those of the day. You would think they were incarnate devils, singing, drinking, dancing, shouting, and cutting antics that would surprise the leader of a circus. They have no shame – are under no restraint – nobody knows them here, and they think they can speak and act as they please, and they are such thieves that they rob one another of the little they possess. The healthy actually run the risk of taking the cholera by robbing the sick. If you have not hired one or two stout, honest fellows from among your fellow passengers to guard your clothes while they are drying, you will never see half of them again. They are a sad set, sir, a sad set. We could, perhaps, manage the men, but the women, sir! – the women! Oh, sir!'"

Lake Transportation between Buffalo New York and Detroit in the Michigan Territory

William Darby was a surveyor for the border between Canada and the United States who wrote a number of tracts regarding geography, including the 1818 ***A tour from the city of New-York, to Detroit, in the Michigan Territory,*** (Kirk & Mercein Publishers, New York, 1819), which gives an account of traveling to Detroit from Buffalo, New York by ship on the Great Lakes. This is the path of immigration for people landing in New York harbor then on to Albany and Buffalo, then by ship to Detroit and by the Sauk Indian Trail to Washtenaw County. This is a good stand-in if your ancestors traveled that way circa 1815 as well as the Erie Canal a decade later.

"Like most other new towns, Buffalo is composed in great part by one street following the course of the road towards the eastward, though the town itself lies very nearly in a north and south direction. A few others cross the main street, but are but little improved. But very little appearance remains of the destructive rage of war. Most of the houses are rebuilt, but as in Kingston, some vestiges still exist to attest the fury of invasion. Many good and convenient, and some elegant dwellings and store houses have been erected since the termination of the last war. Three or four excellent inns, and many decent taverns offer their accommodations to the traveller."

"In coming up the strait, when the woods of Gros isle are cleared, both shores exhibit lines of farm houses, interspersed with orchards and gardens. The settlements on the United States side, continue up the rivieres Ecorces and Rouge, which, together with those along the shore of that strait, present a country in a high state of culture. The Canada shore is not less improved than that of the United States; farm follows farm upon both banks, which, with the houses, windmills, and vessels on the strait, afford a fine picture of agricultural and commercial prosperity."

So you see in this entry that the travel time from Buffalo to Detroit is greatly reduced from Darby's schooner days and because the steam power affords constant motion as opposed to sails a travel schedule can be predicted and relied on. Here you see even in this early date in the Republic's history a dominant drive for faster, bigger, and better.

Making Your Way from Detroit to Buy Land in Washtenaw County

Mark Norris was an entrepreneur and land speculator who came to Washtenaw County in 1827. The following account is from ***The History of Washtenaw County, etc.*** (Chas C. Chapman Publisher, Chicago, 1881). Suppose that you had a Washtenaw County ancestor who purchased land here in the years between 1823 and 1837. Most people who purchased land here in that time-period were from New England directly or a generation removed via western New York State. Much of New England soil is thin and rocky so the fine soils of Ohio were very attractive to farmers, and when Ohio land became available for settlement a lot of it was settled and the rest elevated greatly in price; price follows demand. The rising price of Ohio land made Michigan land, heretofore considered inferior heavy clay, more attractive, and so it was gobbled up and the rest elevated in price.

Ypsilanti and Ann Arbor were situated on the Sauk Indian Trail from Detroit to Chicago where the trail crosses the Huron River, and the distance to the outskirts of Detroit was about one to two day's journey by wagon in the dry season, so those two towns were a natural stopping point for people moving into the

interior of Michigan Territory. Like New York, Detroit and Chicago to name a few, villages and cities situated at the starting point of a journey generally do a tidy business in supply sales, hospitality and any number of small businesses. The Sauk Indian Trail was replaced by Michigan Avenue from Detroit to Chicago and so would be the conduit for western settlement, so as Mark Norris states the lands along that road as well as along the Huron River are greatly increased in price, so he buys lesser land on the chance that the area will take off and his village lots and farmland will yield a handsome profit.

So, if your ancestor came here in that time-period and purchased not one property but several, you can explain this process and use Mark's experience as a substitute for your ancestor's.
[July 9] *Left Buffalo on steamer Marie Antoinette, Captain Whittaker, for Detroit, which was reached July 16 only a seven day's passage."*
[July 18] *After waiting a day for the stage, I started on foot for the interior. Walked as far as Springwells, when I took a due west course of about six miles. Crossed the Rouge, a sluggish, dark, muddy stream, with plenty of rich land on either side, and rich in fever and ague too, I should judge. Traveled about 24 miles. Stopped all night at Andrew's Tavern on Togus Plains."*
[July28] *Have spent most of the day in viewing the village [of Ypsilanti]. Nature and art have combined to make it a place of business. It is situated on the Huron, nine miles below Ann Arbor, and four miles above the landing, where boats of twenty tons burden arrive from the lake to unload. Land is already valued very high."*
[July 29] *To-day bought two village lots (half an acre) for which I paid $100, and returned again to Ann Arbor.*
[July 30] *There is no church and no preaching here today. It seems to be a place for lounging and gossip.*
[August 1] *This day I've been viewing the lands in the vicinity of this village [of Ypsilanti]. Concluded to purchase within a short distance of the village. The lands on the Chicago road, now being built from Detroit west, are mostly taken up by speculators, and also on the river.*
[August 5] *Staid* [sic] *in this village last night. This morning took a deed for the farm purchased yesterday and returned to Ann Arbor*.
[August 6] *Left Washtenaw for Detroit. Traveled to the Rouge within six miles of Detroit. Retired to bed very much fatigued, but the mosquitoes would not let me sleep. They attacked on larboard and starboard, and raked me from "stem to stern". I fought them until my patience, if not my ammunition, was exhausted, when I arose and prepared for flight. Started about 12 o'clock for Detroit. The first three miles I met with no incident worth mentioning, after which I was assailed by an army of dogs at every house. Arriving at Detroit I went to the inn, where, after receiving a long lecture from the landlord for being out at that time of night, I was permitted to go to bed again, and slept until a late hour the following morning. Men, who are not pioneers, are allowed in hotels now minus a landlord's lecture."*

Most of what Mark Norris experienced on this trip is just what anyone would in his time up through at least the end of the 1830s.

The Potato Famine in Ireland

Mrs. Asenath Nicholson was an American who devoted her time to furnishing aid to the Irish amid the potato famine of the late 1840s. The potato failure was spread across Europe but in the south and west of Ireland there were many families who depended on a monoculture of potatoes as their crop. A blight ran rampant for several years in Ireland as well as a pandemic of Asiatic Cholera in 1848 which killed a large part of the Irish population. In the aftermath of the blight many Irish continued to emigrate to North America but unlike earlier emigrations they settled primarily in urban areas and became laborers. My Irish ancestors who settled in Ypsilanti came in this wave and I use these passages as color for their story. Mrs. Nicholson wrote an account of her work in Ireland titled ***The Annals of the Famine in Ireland in 1847, 1848 and 1849*** (E. French Publisher, New York, 1851).

I

"A brother of Theobold Mathew had planted a field of twenty-seven acres, in almost certain faith that they would not be blasted; for weeks they flourished, and promised to yield an abundant crop. The poor people in the neighborhood were blessing the good God for the beautiful patch of the "kind gintlemen", and seemed as happy as though they were ripening for their own use. They have been known to go and look into the field, and take off their hats, and in humble adoration bless the name of God, for his great mercy in sending them the potato again. This was their usual practice when they saw a field looking vigorous. But in one night the spoiler came – this beautiful field in the morning had, in isolated spots, the withering touch of the fatal disease. In a few days the rich extensive crop would not pay the laborer for his toil in gathering it. All was over, and in silent despondency each one submitted to the stroke. The 'still small voice' seemed to say, 'Be still, and know that I am God'. It was something for which man could not reprove his brother, and he dared not reproach his God. 'And what', said an old woman, sitting by her vegetable stall, 'would become of us miserable bodies, if God Almighty had sent the blast on us, and left the potato?' This was the autumn of 1845, when but a partial failure took place – the blast had not then fallen on man, but it did fall, and swept them down as grass before the mower's scythe, yet not one of the victims, through long months of starvation, was heard to murmur against God. They thanked his holy name, both when they saw the potato grow in luxuriance, and when they saw it dried, as by a scorching heat. It was one of the most touching, striking features of the famine, to see a family looking into a withered patch, which the day before looked promising, and hear the exclamations of wonder and praise, weeping and thanksgiving, mingled together, 'He's sent the blast, blessed be his holy name! His blessed will be done – and we'll all die with hunger, and praise God we're all poor sinners', &c. They literally and practically carried out the principle of one in ancient days, who said, 'Though he slay me, yet will I trust in him.'"

II

"A cabin was seen closed one day a little out of the town, when a man had the curiosity to open it, and in a dark corner he found a family of the father, mother, and two children, lying in close compact. The father was considerably decomposed; the mother, it appeared, had died last, and probably fastened the door, which was always the custom when all hope was extinguished, to get into the darkest corner and die, where passersby could not see them. Such family scenes were quite common, and the cabin was generally pulled down upon them for a grave. The man called, begging me to look in. I did not, and could not endure, as the famine progressed, such sights, as well as at the first, they were too real, and these realities became a dread. In all my former walks over the island, by day or night, no shrinking or fear of danger ever retarded in the least my progress, but now, the horror of meeting living walking ghosts, or stumbling upon the dead in my path at night, inclined me to keep within when necessity did not call."

III

"A famine burying-ground on the sea-coast has some peculiarities belonging to itself. First, it often lies on the borders of the sea, without any wall, and the dead are put into the earth without a coffin, so many piles on piles that the top one often can be seen through the thin covering; loose stones are placed over, but the dogs can easily put these aside, and tear away the loose dirt. This burial place was on a cliff, whose sides were covered with rough stones, and the ascent in some parts very difficult. We ascended, sometimes keeping erect, and sometimes being obliged to stoop and use our hands. When we reached the top, the painful novelty repaid all our labor. It was an uneven surface of a few perches, with new-made graves and loose stones covering them. A straw-rope was lying near a fresh-dug grave, which the pilot said belonged to an old man, who two days before he saw climbing the cliff, with a son of fifteen lashed to his back by that cord, bringing in his feeble hand a spade. 'I untied the cord, took the corpse from the father's back, and with the spade, as well as I could, made a grave and put in the boy'; adding, 'Here you see so many have been buried, that I could not cover him well.'

This was the burial-place of Arranmore, and here, at the foot, was the old roaring ocean, dashing its proud waves, embracing in its broad arms this trembling green gem, while the spray was continually sprinkling its salt tears upon its once fair cheek, as if weeping over a desolation that it could not repair."

This last paragraph here I think is particularly poetically poignant and I find my eyes tearing up a bit every time I read it. It translates wonderfully the mood of the scene.

Jerome Drummond *is a frequent contributor and an Editor of the Family History Capers*.

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Having Fun with "Are You Related?"
By Diane Good

In response to a Roots Tech promotional ad from 2024 "Are you related to Steve Rockwood, President and CEO of FamilySearch International?", my attention had been grabbed. I was related, through Rev. John Gorsuch, my 11th great-grandfather.

A few days later I saw the "Are you related to Elvis?" post on Facebook, which I clicked on, and of course I was related. I found out how quickly the common ancestors could change for a famous relative if anyone had made a change to my family line or the famous person's line in FamilySearch trees.

Since I didn't have any data past my 4th great-grandfather in this line, this information was interesting. My 3rd great grandparents, Jesse Hendricks and Mary Polly Knott are well-documented. Using Ancestry Thrulines, hints, and DNA data, I added William Knott and Margaret Ann Peyton to my tree with confidence. Challenges began with my 5th great-grandparents, William Payton, and Mary Rybolt Ross. Was William married twice, or were there two different William Peytons; one marrying Mary Ross, and one marrying Mary Rybolt? It turned out that there were two different Williams.

I wanted to prove who William Payton's father was. I found a Craven Peyton of the right time and place that appeared to have no trees claiming a son William. However, Craven mentioned a son William in his will. My ancestor William Payton's father, William Ambrose Payton, was unsourced at the time, leaving me with no confidence he was my William's father, so I changed my William's father to Craven.

Immediately after I made the change, I was now related to Elvis in a different manner and additionally was related to Muhammed Ali! When I later found that Craven and William Ambrose both had a son William, and that William Ambrose Peyton/Payton (1718-1792) was the likely father, I changed things back. Now I was related to Elvis in another whole new way and was no longer related to Muhammed Ali! (The source, Virginia Genealogies : a Genealogy of the Glassell family of Scotland and Virginia - Peyton, Gloucester and Westmoreland Counties, Virginia; identified Wm. Ambrose as the son of Robert, however, went no further. Later, I found a Peyton Society letter that established the link between Wm. Ambrose and my Wm., who married Mary Rybolt, as father and son -- 2023, 5 12, Letter from Peyton Society of VA James H. Peyton, President, to S. Anastas re Merger of HG Line w A Line 4-25-20.)

So, if one finds oneself in this situation while you are using Family Search trees, and have proof you're correct, you can make a change to add your proof. Then set your change to the preferred version. This way, in cases of disputed information or research, both of you can each set your versions to the preferred version and watch for the new sets of relationships that develop. It cannot be emphasized enough that it is important to examine the notes explaining the changes made to the people in the direct line you are examining.

By far the most interesting relationship I discovered on the FamilySearch and Rootstech websites, was that my brother and I share common ancestors with Elvis Presley, George Washington, and Queen Elizabeth II (through George Reade and Elizabeth Martiau). That was the case before the changes to the Elvis line set in. In the case of Queen Elizabeth, we're connected in two ways, through her maternal grandfather and her maternal grandmother.

In searching for any connection with Elvis, I found that his own family can't agree upon a 'tradition', and that the problem with his Smith line is that his 2nd great grandparents are in dispute, and, so far, unprovable. So, no reliable relationship in that line can be established, and that was the line important to us.

In the case of Queen Elizabeth II, it turns out that two connections have been established by FamilySearch, one through her maternal grandfather and one through her maternal grandmother. We connect to George Reade and Elizabeth Martiau through Claude George Bowes-Lyon, and this connection is soundly proven. The FamilySearch inquiry ignores this connection and connects us through Cecilia Nina Cavendish-Bentinck through Sally Renfro. This connection from our point of view is an unreliable connection based only on tradition. Since I cannot prove I'm related to Sally, nor can anyone prove who her parents were, I must prove my brother's and my own relationship back to George Reade and Elizabeth Martiau.

My line goes back through my father's mother Emile Frey Smith, her mother Grace Alma Farrow, her father James Simpson Farrow, and his mother Barbara A Charles. These people are well proven and have Find a Grave pages. The best proof that Philip Charles was the father of Barbara is in her death record in Boone County Indiana, naming her parents as Philip Charles and Barbara Charles. Philip is the connection, so I don't have to be concerned with his wife's line at this time.

The next generation is more of a challenge. Mary Tabb, the necessary ancestor to link to George Reade, supposedly married John Chisman who was born in 1734. Mary was born in 1755. They had one child, Edmund Tabb Chisman. No marriage records have been found but Edmund was born in 1774. At some point we believe she became a widow and had a second marriage to an "Allen" because there is a marriage record for Mary Allen marrying Lewis Charles, the father of the said Philip Charles, my ancestor. What ties this scenario together is that both Edmund Tabb Chisman and Mary Tabb Chisman Allen Charles wrote wills.

In his will that was written and probated in 1807, Edmund Tabb Chisman mentions his half siblings: Tiplady Charles, Lewis S Charles, John Charles, and Philip Charles. Mary Tabb Chisman Allen Charles wrote her will in 1810 after Edmund died. She mentioned sons Tiplady Charles, Lewis Charles, John Charles, and Philip Charles. So, this Mary must have been a Tabb, as evident in her firstborn's name. The wills link her to my family.

To establish Mary Tabb's relationship to parents John Tabb and Dinah/Diana Moss, there is a Charles Parish, York County, Virginia birth record that says Mary was born 9 Aug 1755 to John and Diana Tabb. To establish both proof of the marriage of John Tabb to Diana Moss, and to prove the identity of her mother, there is a marriage bond deed from York County that was published in 1946 in Polly Cary Mason's *Records of Colonial Gloucester County Virginia, Vol. II:*

MARRIAGE BOND -- JOHN TABB AND DIANA MOSS -- 1754

"William Tabb and John Tabb, both of Gloucester County are firmly bound unto John Sheild of the County of York in the sum of 200L in consideration of the marriage of the above bound John Tabb, son of above bound William Tabb, and Diana Moss. The Condition of above obligation is that if said John Tabb die before said Diana leaving no issue by her that no other child of said William Tabb as Heirs to their Brother John shall lay any claim to the Slaves that came [to John Tabb] by said Diana but that they shall suffer her to enjoy them."

Eleanor Chisman, the mother of Diana Moss, had married Edward Moss, who died shortly after Diana was born, and then married John Shield, as shown in the above deed. To prove who her parents are, Eleanor is documented as being the daughter of Col John Chisman/Cheesman and Eleanor Howard by bible records. The Chisman Bible Records, published in *Genealogies of Virginia Families from the William and Mary College Quarterly. Vol. I. Adams-Clopton,*

not only identify Eleanor, by her birth and death, but also show her parents' marriage, and give the parents of John in his birth record, as follows, in date order:

John Chisman, son of Capt. Thomas Chisman by Elizabeth his wife, was born the 4th of March 1682.
John Chisman and Eleanor Howard were married the 22nd of Dec 1708.
Eleanor Chisman, daughter of John Chisman by Eleanor his wife, was born the 19th of Nov 1717.
John Chisman, Senr., departed this life the 10th of Sep 1728, aged 46 years.
Eleanor Shield, dau. of John Chisman by Eleanor his wife, departed this life the 22nd of May 1765.

To prove the marriage of Capt. Thomas Chisman to Elizabeth Reade, it is shown in the Wikipedia article on George Reade (colonial governor) that Elizabeth (1654-1717) was the fifth child of George Reade and Elizabeth Martiau. Neither Elizabeth nor Capt. Thomas Cheesman have Wikipedia articles. However, Augustine Warner, husband of Mildred Reade (1643-1694), does have an article. Wikipedia solidifies my proof of having common ancestors with George Washington, and Queen Elizabeth, as quoted here: "Warner also has many descendants and is the common ancestor of George Washington and Queen Elizabeth II ".

Diane Good *(and her brother* ***Dorm Dickerson****) are members of The Genealogical Society of Washtenaw County, Inc. Diane was active in our DNA SIG.*

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In the Library
By Matt Marvin and Jerome Drummond

These books have been added to the GSWC Library Catalog by Matt Marvin, who recently left the Society to pursue a career in the Cleveland area, and Jerome Drummond, newly appointed Librarian.

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IN MEMORIAM

THOMAS ROBERT CROWLEY

25 April 1941-21 April 2025

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CONTRIBUTORS

Jerome Drummond	**Diane Good**	**Joyce Mallory**
Matt Marvin	**Marcia McCrary**	**Cyndy Steward**

FAMILY HISTORY CAPERS

Editorial Committee: Jerome Drummond, Marcia McCrary, Cyndy Steward. Proofing: Marcia Hegstad. Indexing: Marcia McCrary, Cyndy Steward. Index Proofing: Richard Redman

The Name Index to Family History Capers Volume 48 (2024-2025) is an every-name index. Cross-references have been made for some possible variations in surname spellings. Maiden names, where known, are indexed. A married female with an unknown given name may appear as Jones, ... (...) or Jones, ..., Mrs. An unknown given name is indicated by .... and an unknown maiden name is recorded as (...). An illegible part of a word is recorded as ---. A name may appear more than once on a page.

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